

and victims of gun violence. I opposed this bill and will continue to oppose it because it slams closed the courthouse door to those seeking justice for victims of gun violence, such as the victims of the horrific sniper who terrorized the citizens of DC, Maryland, and Virginia just a short time ago.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I would like the RECORD to reflect that I was necessarily absent for the vote on the Byrd amendment offered to S. Con. Res. 118 on Wednesday, March 16, 2005. Had I been present for this vote, I would have voted in favor of the amendment.

COLONEL PETE BUNCE, USAF

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I would like to pay tribute to Colonel Pete Bunce of the United States Air Force. Over the past few years, he has earned my personal thanks many times over for a job well done.

Many of us in the Senate know Colonel Bunce, who for the last 3 years has served as liaison to the both the Budget and Appropriations Committees. He has been a strong advocate for the Air Force and has worked tirelessly to improve communications between the Air Force and the Senate.

Colonel Bunce has been a good friend to the State of North Dakota and to this Senator. He has provided important assistance to me in organizing many meetings with the top leadership of the Air Force and the Department of Defense. Community leaders from the three North Dakota communities with the closest ties to the Air Force—Fargo, Grand Forks, and Minot—have all been able to join me for high-level Pentagon visits thanks to his help. He and his staff have also always been tremendously helpful in the Budget Committee's deliberations on national defense spending.

His professional advice helped me better understand the costs and sacrifices made by our military personnel during this war. I know many of my colleagues feel the same way. His personal testimony as the parent of a troop in harm's way was even more valuable. Pete's son, Justin, came home wounded from Iraq. Just as he was recovering from that injury, he was in a serious car accident. I want Pete to know that he, Justin, and the entire Bunce family are in my thoughts and prayers.

While I have relied on Colonel Bunce's military advice, I have valued his friendship even more. Pete, as you enter into a well deserved retirement, please know that you go with the best wishes of this Senator and all of us in the Senate.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate

crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

Last February, a 37-year-old gay man was brutally murdered because of his sexual orientation. The attacker allegedly poured gasoline over the victim and set him on fire while he slept. The police are investigating the incident as a hate crime.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

CELEBRATING IDAHO HEROES

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Ms. Tina Taysom and Mr. Greg Cannell of American Falls, ID, for their heroic actions in saving the life of a rural mail carrier who skidded off a winding mountain road and into a nearby river in Idaho.

On December 1, 2003, Ron Meadville, a rural mail carrier, was returning from his 110-mile route along the remote North Fork road northwest of Salmon, ID. Friends Tina Taysom and Greg Cannell were traveling ahead of Meadville on the same road. They pulled over to look at some deer, and Meadville passed them. When they pulled back on the road and rounded a bend, they couldn't see the mail truck but saw a set of skid marks that veered off the road, toward the near-frozen river. Meadville had hit a patch of ice that sent his truck hurtling over the 25-foot embankment to land upside down in the Salmon River, in more than 5 feet of 33-degree water.

Greg Cannell and Tina Taysom acted immediately. They stopped their truck, jumped out, slid down the steep embankment, and plunged into the river. After several strenuous attempts, they were able to pull open the truck door, grab Meadville's hand, and pull him out through an opening between the seat and the doorjamb. By this time, Meadville was experiencing hypothermia. Taysom and Cannell pulled Meadville up the embankment to their vehicle. Meadville managed to tell them he lived about a mile away, and they took him to his home, where they helped Meadville's wife care for him. They refused any care for themselves until they knew Meadville was safe.

Greg Cannell and Tina Taysom put themselves in harm's way to save a stranger. They refuse to be called heroes, but they are truly heroes to Ron Meadville and his family. Without their courageous actions, Ron Mead-

ville would not be alive today. Their actions truly were heroic, and it is a pleasure for me to honor them and share their story.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE KENTUCKY NEW ERA/ROTARY REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC ALL-STAR TEAM PROGRAM

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize nominees for the Regional Middle School Academic All-Star Team from the Pennyroyal region in western Kentucky.

The regional Academic All-Star program's purpose is to recognize top academic scholars and performers. Students from Caldwell, Christian, Trigg and Todd Counties of Kentucky were nominated based on their academic performance in seven disciplines: English, foreign language, journalism, mathematics, science, social studies, and the creative and performing arts. The students are judged on their core academic score, the curriculum of the student, their grade point average, academic honors earned, unique accomplishments and achievements, extra-curricular activities, employment history, and an autobiographical essay.

Education is the foundation upon which we reach our human potential. Students in Kentucky are developing their talents, furthering their education, and pursuing their aspirations in life through programs like the Academic All-Star program. Encouragement and recognition develop confidence and achievement among young Americans—the future leaders of our country.

The following students have been nominated for their academic excellence: Alicia Lynn Morris, North Drive Middle School; Ashley Chewning, University Heights Academy; Brittany S. Hurt, Hopkinsville Middle School; Chelsea Barnett, Christian Co. Middle School; Corrinna M. Kinnard, Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic School; Janelle Nichol Gilmer, Todd Co. Middle School; Megan Gray, Mahaffey Middle School; Sam Mitchell, Caldwell Co. Middle School; Sherry Cheatham, Heritage Christian Academy; Wesley Croom, Trigg Co. Middle School; Bree Raquel Hokulani Goodwin, North Drive Middle School; Elizabeth Settle, University Heights Academy; Emily Beatty, Todd Co. Middle School; Kate Milani, Mahaffey Middle School; Laura Beth Baggett, Heritage Christian Academy; Morgan C. Murray, Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic School; Sarah C. Hazelmeyer, Trigg Co. Middle School; Shelley L. Traylor, Caldwell Co. Middle School; Taylor Queen, Christian Co. Middle School; Wendy A. Johnson, Hopkinsville Middle School; Andrew Landreth, Caldwell Co. Middle School; Jacob Kyle Langston, North Drive Middle School; Jonathan A. Chavez, Sts. Peter & Paul